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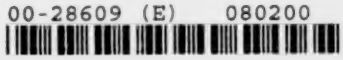
LETTER DATED 8 FEBRUARY 2000 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 3 February 2000, which I have received from the Acting Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations.

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

00-28609 (E) 080200



Annex

Letter dated 3 February 2000 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1264 (1999), I attach the sixth periodic report on the operations of the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET) (see appendix). I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

(Signed) David STUART
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Acting Permanent Representative

Appendix

Sixth periodic report to the United Nations on the operations of the International Force, East Timor

10 December 1999 to 31 January 2000

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The International Force, East Timor (INTERFET) has fulfilled its mandate under Security Council resolution 1264 (1999) to restore peace and security to all parts of East Timor, except some areas of the border region of the Oecussi enclave. Security in this area alone remains a concern for INTERFET and is a matter that will require continuing attention and careful management by its successor.

2. In achieving its mandate for peace and security in East Timor (except the border region of the Oecussi enclave), INTERFET has succeeded in:

(a) Establishing peace and security through a credible and deterrent security presence in all parts of the territory;

(b) Preventing armed violence by any group in East Timor, including militia groups;

(c) Developing, in cooperation with Indonesia, agreed procedures for border management along the East Timor-West Timor border;

(d) Creating conditions, and providing escort support, for large numbers of displaced persons to return to their homes in East Timor.

3. The mandate of INTERFET to support wider United Nations operations and humanitarian assistance programmes has also been met. These objectives have been achieved through:

(a) The continued facilitation of the transition from the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) to the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET);

(b) Facilitating the conduct of humanitarian operations of an increasing size and effectiveness across East Timor.

4. In addition to carrying out tasks directly associated with the achievement of its mandate, INTERFET undertook a much broader range of duties. These included national reconstruction tasks, governance and administration, policing and law and order functions, as well as investigations into possible crimes against humanity.

5. The successful achievement of such a wide range of important and simultaneously pressing tasks is a credit to the members of the national contingents participating in INTERFET. We would like to recognize and express

appreciation for the outstanding contribution made to INTERFET, and the achievement of its mandate, by all countries that contributed to the multinational force.

II. SECURITY SITUATION

6. The security situation in all parts of East Timor, except some areas of the border region of the Oecussi enclave, is now benign. For the vast majority of the population in East Timor, the threat to peace and security from militia has been removed.

7. While militia groups along the West Timor-East Timor border may continue to be a potential, albeit occasional, irritant, it is expected that their activities will mainly be low level and contained by current border management protocols. Nevertheless, INTERFET forces on the western border, and their ensuing UNTAET counterparts, will need to remain vigilant for signs of an increase in militia activity.

8. Militia groups operating from West Timor continue to pose an unacceptable threat to peace and security in some parts of the border regions of the Oecussi enclave. This threat reinforces the appropriateness of a mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter for both INTERFET and the United Nations peacekeeping force. Ensuring security in the Oecussi enclave will be a high priority for the peacekeeping force. The cross-border nature of the militia actions underscores the need for this matter to be resolved primarily by the Government of Indonesia.

9. The future of FALINTIL remains an unresolved issue. Although the objective of disarming FALINTIL proved unachievable in the current circumstances, arrangements to secure FALINTIL within its cantonment in Aileu have been effective.

10. In parts of East Timor (Dili and Baucau), lawlessness rather than security is the main concern. A recent increase in the number of law and order related incidents has been noted in East Timor. These incidents appear to be caused in part by widespread unemployment and some resentment of the large foreign presence in the territory. In the absence of a security threat in the vast majority of East Timor, INTERFET troops have provided a policing presence in much of the territory, but dispute resolution and the maintenance of law and order remain the responsibility of UNTAET. Continued attention to achieving the early deployment of the 1,640 United Nations civilian police to East Timor will be required to help manage rising social volatility in the territory.

III. BORDER MANAGEMENT

11. Border management protocols established under the "Holbrooke agreement" have worked well and been important in rapidly and efficiently resolving low-level incidents on the border. They have also led to an increase in the level of constructive communication between the Indonesian armed forces (TNI) and INTERFET forces on border management matters.

12. The "Holbrooke" border management framework was formalized on 13 January 2000 with the signing of a memorandum of understanding between INTERFET, UNTAET and TNI. The memorandum outlines an agreed border for East Timor operations, which should further reduce the number of border incidents. (Note: The East Timor boundary stipulated in the memorandum is to be used for military and not political purposes.) The memorandum of understanding also established a number of junction points on the Oecussi and West Timor-East Timor borders, some of which will be staffed by United Nations military observers to facilitate refugee return, monitor traffic and liaise with tactical units on border incident management.

13. An agreement has also been reached that gives refugees unhindered personal passage across the border, and provides that TNI and INTERFET will disarm individuals not authorized to carry firearms and non-traditional weapons. It is hoped that the agreement will permit a smoother and faster repatriation of refugees from West Timor.

14. More serious border incidents, particularly in the Oecussi enclave, are not representative of the broader security situation. In all cases, INTERFET forces have responded to, and successfully repelled, incursions by militia groups into East Timorese territory.

IV. TRANSITION TO THE UNITED NATIONS TRANSITION AUTHORITY IN EAST TIMOR

15. The transition from INTERFET to a United Nations peacekeeping operation will commence on 1 February 2000 and is due to be completed by 28 February 2000. A joint operational transition declaration will be signed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the Commander of INTERFET and the Commander of the UNTAET peacekeeping force on the final day of transition. The final transition will occur when the UNTAET peacekeeping force assumes full responsibility for military security in all of East Timor. This will happen no later than 28 February 2000.

16. A joint transition plan, agreed by the United Nations and INTERFET, is currently being implemented. The plan provides for concurrent INTERFET and United Nations peacekeeping operation headquarters, and the progressive transfer of responsibility for geographic regions from one force to the other. In preparation for the end of INTERFET and transition to the UNTAET peacekeeping force, several countries participating in INTERFET have begun to withdraw their troops and assets from East Timor. New UNTAET forces will progressively come on line.

17. The Commander of the United Nations peacekeeping force, Lieutenant General Jaime de los Santos, and the Deputy Commander, Major General Mike Smith, arrived in East Timor on 25 January 2000.

V. DISPLACED PERSONS IN WEST TIMOR

18. Militia intimidation and misinformation campaigns continue to deter displaced persons in West Timor refugee camps from returning to East Timor. While it is difficult to know how many refugees remain in West Timor, the United Nations estimates the number to be around 120,000. The total number of returnees to East Timor is approximately 130,000. East Timorese leaders, in conjunction with INTERFET and UNTAET, continue to make concerted efforts to counter militia misinformation about expectations of life in East Timor. Conditions in West Timor refugee camps, coupled with an increasing number of deaths, are a concern.

VI. OUTLOOK

19. The security situation in the East Timorese territory, with the exception of border areas along the Oecussi enclave, remains benign. INTERFET has played an important role in assisting in the restoration of peace and security to the territory through the suppression of militia activity and the facilitation of humanitarian assistance activities.